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Tax benefits promise film production spree

By DANE LANKEN
of The Gazette

Film production in Canada is going to take off in 1977, says John Vernon, the Canadian actor now in Hollywood, and we had better be prepared for it.

"It's because of tax benefits, the 100 per cent write-off that the government has allowed for 'Canadian,' productions," Vernon explained.

"Producers are going to be coming here from everywhere.

"We've already had a preview at the end of '76, when there were five features shooting in Montreal and the Ritz was so full of producers from the U.S. and Italy and England that they were bumping into each other in the halls."

Vernon was in Montreal for most of November and December acting in two of those five features, the male lead opposite Sophia Loren in the U.S.-Canadian co-production *Angela*, and a bit in the British-Canadian horror movie *The Uncanny*.

"Now this isn't just actors' talk," Vernon emphasized in an interview just before heading home to southern California for Christmas. "This is what the business people are saying. They've been here looking around, people like Zev Braun and Carlo Ponti, and they'll be back."

The catch, Vernon cautioned, is that we have to be prepared.

"I hope there'll be enough scripts, equipment and personnel to fill the need," he said. "Or let me make that more positive — that's how optimistic I am for the future of the film industry in Canada. Writers, get writing, we're going to need you. Technicians, if you're unavailable here we're going to have to bring in top people from outside."

And what about those oft-expressed fears that all these Canadian movies aren't really "Canadian" at all?

Vernon leaned back and a smile crept over his rugged features.

"Film is international," he said. "Crap comes from anywhere."

Vernon himself comes from Regina, Sask. He was born there 44 years ago, began acting in high school (Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*) and studied at the Banff Centre and then the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London — on scholarships yet.

In the late '50s and early '60s he was at Stratford, "carrying spears," and on stage in Toronto, and in maybe 20 films at the National Film Board, educational dramas to *Nobody Waved Goodbye*, but the big thing was television, CBC TELEVISION.

"I've still got a soft spot for the place", he said. "The major part of my development as an actor happened there" — which is true for practically every good Canadian actor.

Vernon has done more than 300 shows for CBC-TV, including the *Wojeck* series in the late '60s, and a drama last month entitled *Turncout* and one coming up next Sunday called *Someday Soon*.

The *Wojeck* series was important, not just for itself, but because it was in that role that the proverbial Hollywood talent scouts saw John Vernon and decided it was he they needed for a part opposite Lee Marvin in that modern classic *Point Blank*.

Vernon played that part in '67. In '68 he moved to L.A.

"I went the right way," he said, "first class. I went there to do a film. I was invited. You know Canadians still go there by the thousands — California is still the frontier. Probably half the people in variety television in Hollywood are Canadian.

"I don't see myself moving back here. We're settled there now, my wife and kids and I, and even if they make more movies here, Hollywood is still the capital.

"But my roots are in Canada. I froze my ears on too many Prairie hockey rinks ever to forget."

Just the same, Vernon and Hollywood have mixed well. He has racked up dozens of credits in American television series, and the dozen films he's made form a blue ribbon list — among them George Cukor's *Justine*, Hitchcock's *Topaz*, *Dirty Harry* and *Charlie Varrick* for Don Siegel, *Brannigan* opposite John Wayne, and lately, with Clint Eastwood, in that dandy western *Outlaw Josie Wales*.

Gazette, Garth Pritchard

John Vernon is full of optimism for the future of the film industry in Canada.

Musicians' values changing

Haendel's not neglected — just too busy

Ida Haendel: Back again

Music

By Jacob Siskind

"You know, when I was a student and in the early days of my career, I would listen to the great artists of the period in conversation with awe.

"Josef Szigeti, Georges Enesco, Karl Flesch — they all talked about music. They worried about how best to express their ideas on the music they were playing.

"They wanted to communicate their feelings about the scores in such a way that audiences and other musicians would be able to understand the composer better.

"That was their only concern ... to make music in the best way possible — the most honest, sincere, direct way."

Ida Haendel was comparing the "Good old days" with the present as we chatted in her home not long after her return from an arduous tour of Europe. She feels that something has gone out of the musical scene and she regrets its loss.

"Today most of the young people talk about their careers, not the music. They worry about how to wear their hair, the color of their clothes or the tightness of their pants. That has become more important than the music.

"Of course these are important. They help to create an illusion that the artist must sustain, but they are not even of secondary importance — at least, to me."

Ida Haendel's career as a concert violinist began in Poland in the 1930s when she was a child prodigy, but even in those tender years she was exposed to the great musical thinkers of the period and they left an indelible impression with her.

"Our values seem to have changed completely in the past two or three decades ... not just performers, of course, but society as a whole. Success is measured now by numbers, rather than by the quality of the product being offered."

Of course, if sheer numbers are an indication, Ida Haendel's career has certainly been a success.

In the past decade or so she has appeared regularly with all major Canadian orchestras, playing the Beethoven, Brahms, Saint-Saens and Lalo concerti with the Montreal Symphony on several occasions, and she is to add the Bruch *g minor Concerto* to that list next [illegible].

In Toronto she has played the Sibelius, Bra[illegible] and Shostakovitch concerti and has played major works in the concerto repertoire with the Quebec, Victoria, Kingston and Calgary orchestras. She is to play in Hamilton early in the new year.

"I don't know why some people still talk of me as being neglected by North American orchestras. I have often turned down engagements simply because I am too busy, or we have not been able to come to terms on the matter of the fee.

"People get the feeling that if you are not playing in your own city every week you are being neglected. I am so busy with my concerts in Britain and my tours in Europe that I simply do not have time to play here any more than I do.

"This spring I am back in Montreal to play in an all-Mozart program with Alexander Brott and the McGill Chamber Orchestra. If anything, I think I may be over-exposed here."

For nearly two decades Ida Haendel made no recordings for a major recording label. Her only ventures into the field were for the Supraphon company in Czechoslovakia, where she made some recordings with the late Karel Anceri.

Last spring, she recorded the *Sibelius Violin Concerto* for EMI, a performance that has since also been issued in Japan (along with a reissue of her famous recording of the *Brahms Violin Concerto* with Sergiu Celibidache conducting the London Symphony) and will shortly be released in Germany, France and North America as well.

This summer she played the violin solos in the complete version of Tschaikowsky's *Swan Lake* recorded by Andre Previn and the London Symphony. She did this as a special favor to Previn on very short notice.

Previn, who had previously been scheduled to record the *Glazunov Concerto* with Haendel later this year insisted that they record the *Tschaikowsky Concerto* as well in the same album. And that recording will be made this summer.

While we were on the subject of recordings I asked about other releases and projects.

"I recorded an album of Italian music with Geoffrey Parsons last season which will be released in Britain next month, and in June I am to record the Britten and Walton violin concerti with Paavo Berglund and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

"But there is another project coming up about which I am quite excited. In March I hope to be in Israel to make a film which will be presented on television. John Bassett, who made a 30-minute documentary on me several years ago, is to shoot this film as well.

"What is interesting is that EMI may decide to record the music at the same time the film is being made and I shall have an album of the *Lalo Symphonie Espagnol* and the *Chausson Poeme* with the Israel Philharmonic for release later this summer.

"The film of the performance will be part of a documentary one-hour television show which EMI will probably distribute."

The conductor for the recording and television production will be Eduardo Mata.

While in Israel, Haendel has been invited to play the *Bruch Concerto*, the same work she performs here next week, with the New Philharmonia, which will be touring that country at the time under the direction of Eugen Jochum.

Also this spring, there is to be a performance in Vienna of the Schumann and Szymanowski violin concerti.

That will be with Kazimierz Kord, who conducted the Toronto Symphony on its European tour, on the podium. Ida Haendel was the soloist with the orchestra on that tour.

Carole a butcher? Elton a bud? Beware the rock-tossing rock fan

Rock & Pop

by

Juan Rodriguez

"You Always Hurt the One You Love"
— *title of a popular song*

Rummaging through the files at the end of the year, I came across some of the more opinionated reader comments on this agent's pop and rock music reviews over the course of 1976.

Without further ado, the public's side of the story:

Concerning the Carole King show at the Forum in March:

"Come on now, Mr. Rodriguez, I am sure that Carole King did not win five Grammy awards by butchering songs ... You do not appreciate good music — music that portrays warmth and feelings — when you hear it. Lawrence Welk may be your style, but please, save yourself some embarrassment by not comparing his techniques to Carole King's. Who knows, you're probably the type of person who believes that women should be kept at home, barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen ...

"In any case, if you're planning to attend the Cat Stevens concert ... I truly suggest that you turn up your hearing aid and listen well before you write such ignorant articles." (L.T.)

On the Telly Savalas show, Place des Arts, November:

"... a waste of press-ink and space. A one-night performance of fun & music does not need such cutting remarks. Maybe your jealousy showed in the paragraph of girls stroking Telly's body, or do you have a hang-up?"

"... People do not buy tickets to shows if they didn't want to go and enjoy the evening ... We like to see, in person, famous people we only read about or watch on T.V. But with write-ups like yours, they will refuse to come to Montreal, thinking 'all Canadians' feel the same as you." (Mrs. A.K.)

On Al Stewart's show at Le Plateau, November:

"I was very upset with your review ... I go to alot of shows in Montreal and I haven't seen a good show like that since Bowie. I thought that show went over very well. Every one I talked to, really enjoyed it. As for trippers, I was straight and I didn't see any acid eyes' anywhere. I especially thought the sound was excellent ... I am a concerned Stewart fan. P.S. don't compare *Roads to Moscow* to *Spanish Train*." (D.M.)

On the recent Elton John album, *Blue Moves*:

"I just can't see how anyone could be so low on a person and his music than you are. Saying that he has an expressionless voice is like a slap in the face."

"I have just one question for you Mr. Rodriguez. How could Elton John have risen to stardom with an expressionless voice and formless lyrics?" (K.S. age 14)

On the Aerosmith-Rush show, Forum, December:

"My heartiest compliments for your fine review ... References to 'banshee-yelling', 'relentless bass buzz'' and 'regulation-size rock-crotches' were perfect representatives of tasteless, illiterate and worn-out rock that is foisted upon us by bands of the same character that call themselves 'America's premier road attraction,' 'the loud and proud' or Aerosmith." (R.B.)

SPIN OFF

Jazzy capsules

In an attempt to come to grips with the more than one hundred 1976 jazz releases left in my reviewing purgatory, the next few jazz Spinoffs will be dedicated to capsule appreciation, rather than in-depth assessment.

But first, a bit of advice on how to keep your LPs in mint condition. First of all, always remove the plastic "shrink wrap" completely. Once the shrink is slit and air enters the cover, the cardboard will expand but the shrink will not; this can cause the cover to buckle, and over a period of time, the album will warp.

In most cases, the LP is inside a dust jacket. The record should be stored inside the duste jacket and slipped into the cover with the slit of the dust jacket at right angles to that of the cover facing up.

Also, a dust-brush attachment which fits all record-player arms can be bought at any record store for about 50 cents. It'll pick up amazing amounts of dust and lint from the grooves before the needle picks up the sound.

Philosophy, Europe, electronics, surprises and theatre each have a chapter in the next few selections. Mose Allison, **Your Mind Is On Vacation** (Atlantic), presents the pianist-philosopher with 12 tunes in standard trio fashion or in some cases with saxes and trumpet. It's new Mose, it's different lyrics-wise and thoroughly enjoyable.

From Viennese pianist Joe Zawinul, **Concerto Retitled** (Atlantic) is a re-release collection presenting him at his classical best. He is a magnificant contemporary composer and interpreter and should appeal to all music lovers. Another classical chamber-jazz contribution is Eberhard Weber's **Yellow Fields** (ECM). This German bassist leader plays long compositions in quartet formation which reflect European classics, Oriental and Eastern music, the whole delightfully spruced up with jazz improvisation. As with his previous *The Colors Of Chloe* (ECM), Weber should attract fans from all quarters.

Czech bassist Miroslav Vitous **Majesty Music** (Arista Freedom) is a double pleasure in that he seems sto have somewhat abandoned the electrified nonsense of his previous album. *Majesty Music* offers plenty of acoustic bass, and even acoustic piano solos from that most talented young man. The sound is contemporary "jazz-rock-cum-disco," full of life and introduces yet another Czech, reeds and flute-man Jaroslav Jakubovic.

For those with an educated avant-garde taste, a preference for musique concrete or simply an attraction for the unusual, there is George Russell **Electronic Sonata For Souls Loved By Nature** (Strata-East) a hybrid electronic-acoustic blend of definite charm. The leader is on piano with fellow-American bassist Red Mitchell; the remaining four sidemen are European and the record was produced in Sweden. Though musically the tenor saxist and trumpeter are disappointing, the compositions and concept are fascinating.

Surprises from Anthony Braxton with two new medodic recordings. **Creative Music Orchestra 1976** (Arista Freedom) represents, as Braxton states, his first opportunity to have compositions for large ensemble available on record. The music is novel, well played and intriguing. It also exhibits a good sense of humor, a rarity for avant-garde music. Regretfully, the Canadian release has not seen fit to include Braxton's words about his music, nor to list the members of the orchestra. The second Braxton is **Duets 1976** (Arista Freedom) featuring pianist Muhal Richard Abrams. Again the music is melodic and Braxton plays an impressive array of woodwinds with mastery: Alto, sopranino and contrabass saxes, clarinet, E-flat clarinet and contrabass clarinet. Besides a composition by Eric Dolphy and one by Scott Joplin, there are three Braxton originals and only one improvised tune by the duet members. The music is imaginative and the melodic appeal is a very new side of Braxton.

The last experimental offering deals with jazz-theatre. The Art Ensemble of Chicago, **The Paris Session** (Arista Freedom) is full of surprises, fun dialogue, sounds, music, space, and a whole trick-bag. These four young men are up to their ears in an experiment brimming with tantalizing possibilities. Where will they go from here? The suspense is a good sign.

— NIGHTHAWK

Beach Boys 'n' Eagles

California music has been represented best over the past two decades by the Beach Boys and the Eagles, groups with differing outlooks on the task of seeking pleasure and "love" on the beach and on the road. Two recent releases — **Beach Boys '69, Live in London** (Capitol) and The Eagles' **Hotel California** (Asylum) — suggest how far the syndrome has progressed.

The Beach Boys, of course, were the archetypal pleasure seekers — all they could think about were surfing, hot rods, and girls and their outlook represented the good ol' American way (innocent and carefree). That is, until drugs set in, during the mid-1960s, spawning the classic Good Vibrations period of recorded sounds. The boys tossed the candy-cane shirts to the wind and off they went into introspective never-neverland — in the process recording some of their most interesting work.

However, their creative efforts earned them nothing but sagging sales and a "cult" reputation in America, a country that has always had a hard time understanding its indigenous artists. In Europe, though, it's a different matter and **Beach Boys '69** is a live chronicle of how the group coped with adulation. Only now, that the group has become such a huge touring attraction (they're at the Forum later this month) and a strong "greatest-hits" disc seller, has this record been issued in America, after years of being imported here.

The Beach Boys are in their prime here with simple but effective arrangements of some of their greatest material: *Vibrations*, *God Only Knows* (the lingering theme behind the latter-day film, Shampoo), *California Girls*, *Do It Again*, *Wouldn't It Be Nice*, *Darlin'* and others. They slip you into a world of innocence and decadence.

A more updated theme — narcissim and romanticism — is explored by the Eagles, a Los Angeles group comprised of only one native, putting on airs of the drugstore cowboy. Their harmonies, which without the cowpoke rhythms sound remarkably like the barbershop variations of the Beach Boys, carry them through some hairy, neurotic tales of love and romance on the open road.

California Hotel is their fifth album, arriving after the tremendously successful Greatest Hits, and it is probably the most complete; the Eagles have had a few weak cuts on their records but the new one sounds the most consistent. This despite the addition of guitarist Joe Walsh, who has since left the group (replaced by songwriting partner J. D. Souther).

There is an oblivious macho streak about the Eagles that constitutes both their charm and their limitations, but their peaceful easy rhythms and voices sure sound mighty pleasin'.

— JUAN RODRIGUEZ

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